

BELL, (C.)

## Seventh Inaugural Address

OF

CLARK BELL, Esq.,

AS PRESIDENT OF THE MEDICO LEGAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK.

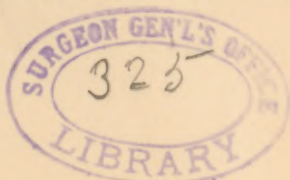
PRONOUNCED JANUARY 8, 1887.

### *Fellows of the Medico Legal Society :*

Two years have elapsed since I pronounced my retiring address as your President, and introduced as my successor, Prof. R. O. DOREMUS, that distinguished Chemist, who has won renown in two hemispheres in the science of Toxicology.

The past year, the Society has been guided in its deliberations and policy, by one of its oldest and most sincere friends, who has on all occasions, given every aid in his power to forward the work of the body, Prof. ISAAC LEWIS PEET.

I had hoped that wiser counsels would have obtained, and that some of the many distinguished scientists, whose names are an honor and credit to this body, would



have been selected to fill this chair, after Dr. Peet had declined re-election, and left to me only the duty of conducting the Medico Legal Journal, which already encroached more upon my professional labors than was agreeable to me.

The voice of the Society was so pronounced, however, that I have felt it my duty to yield to its wishes, and I accept the office with thanks, for the complimentary manner in which that choice was made.

It is now nearly fifteen years, gentlemen of the Medico Legal Society, since I pronounced my first Inaugural Address as your President, and the progress made in Forensic Medicine in that interval of time, has been remarkable, and worthy of marked comment and attention.

#### MEMBERSHIP.

There are three classes of members in this body—Active, Honorary, and Corresponding. On December 31, 1885, at the close of the last fiscal year of my Presidency, there were on our roll 407 names, composed of 281 active, 117 corresponding, and 9 honorary.

On December 31, 1886, our roll contained 308 names, composed of 258 active, 11 honorary and 120 corresponding names:

The loss by death to the Society in 1886, has been larger by far than ever before in the history of the body in any one year.

Of our honorary members, Prof. FRANK H. HAMIL-

TON, the eminent surgeon and authority on fractures and dislocations, for two years President of this Society, has gone to his rest.

From our corresponding list, death has taken such lustrous names as—

LE GRAND DU SAULLE, of France ; General Procurator Dr. JULIUS GLASER, of Vienna ; GEO. L. HARRISON, Esq., of Philadelphia ; B. C. INGELS, M. D., of Belgium ; General Staats Anwalt SCHWARZE, of Dresden ; Prof. Dr. AXEL JADERHOLM, of Sweden ; Dr. R. P. BROWN, of Addison, N. Y. And from our active members, such names as Dr. A. M. Shew, Superintendent of the Connecticut State Asylum at Middletown, Conn. ; Hon. Isiah Williams, Hon. John D. Coughlin, Hon. B. A. Willis, Dr. Horace P. Farnham, Ex-United States District-Attorney George B. Corkhill, General George W. Palmer.

#### THE LABORS OF THE YEAR.

The more important labors of this body may be said to be :—

- 1st. The completion of the publication of the last of its larger volumes to the Literature of Forensic Medicine,—a work of 550 pages, embracing a large number of the original papers read before the Society, from the fall of 1874 to the early part of the year 1877.
- 2nd. The reading and publication of a series of valuable papers contributed by scientists, which have

mostly appeared in the Medico Legal Journal, allusions to which have been made by my predecessor in his retiring address.

3rd. Awakenning a still deeper interest in the science of Medical Jurisprudence among our own members, and helping to widen and broaden that interest, and extend the fame and renown, of the Society through the medium of the Medico Legal Journal, and the kindness of the cotemporaneous press throughout the world.

The real measure to be applied, in determining the value of the work done by a scientific body, such as this, does not so much depend on who attends the sessions of the body; as in what is contributed to the science from the body, or co-laborers in its work. The papers read before this society, and the discussions thereby awakened and interest aroused on the practical Medico Legal questions and issues of the hour, reach the students of the science of Medical Jurisprudence in every country in Europe, in Great Britain and all her Colonies, the States of Central and South America, and indeed, all the nations of the earth.

#### LIBRARY.

You will, I know, bear with me when I say that the cause of the Library has not received that attention from the members of the Society which it should.

There has been a slow and steady growth, but not one commensurate with the needs of the subject.

Have members sent in their usual donations of volumes? and should we not again arouse ourselves to the work of placing all accessible works on this science in all modern tongues? upon the shelves of the Library,

### PROGRESS OF THE SCIENCE.

I will but speak, of the recent progress of Forensic Medicine during the two years since January, 1885.

AMERICA.—In our own country, the two subjects of most commanding interest have been—

1. *Lunacy reform.*
2. *The care and treatment of the insane.*

As to lunacy reform in New York, while there are no differences of opinion anywhere, as to the serious defects in our lunacy statutes, especially regarding commitments; various causes have conspired to prevent that legislative correction, which public sentiment demands. It is doubtful if we shall reach a true solution in the State of New York, until either the Governor, acting on his own motion as did Governor Hoyt, of Penn., or the Legislature, by special Act, shall name a commission, to take up the whole subject of a revision of the Lunacy Statutes of the State.

Should the executive lend the weight of his office to the movement, and name a commission of distinguished men, who would serve without compensation, we should

soon be at the root of the evil. The position taken by this body is well defined, and the action of sister States and foreign countries, teach us the impolicy of further delay.

New York should lead rather than follow in such a work.

As to the care and treatment of the insane, the advance has been steady, pronounced and healthful. We observe as to *mechanical restraint* in asylums, that Superintendents, one after another, are discarding cribs, muffs, camisoles and the various implements so much in vogue in the quite recent past.

No Superintendent within our knowledge, has made the trial seriously and in good earnest, who has not succeeded.

None who have succeeded have returned, and gone back to their use. The success of those who have, year after year, in the larger institutions, gone on without resorting to it, kindles a flame whose brilliant and beautiful light shines into every asylum in the land. It is a light of beneficence, of kindness, of gentleness, of love, and blesses alike those who wait upon and keep its lustre undimmed and visible, and the darkened minds on whom it shines. It glorifies the giver and the receiver. Long before the end of the nineteenth century, all there will be left of mechanical restraint in America, will be its terrible traditions, and we will read of the chains and other instruments used in American institutions, as we now do in the Parliamentary reports of Great Britain, and of their counterpart there, in the first half of the present century.

FRANCE is now at work on the Reconstruction of her Lunacy Statutes. The debate was opened in her Senate last month.

ENGLAND is deep in the questions of how to improve the present statutes of that country, which in many respects, as they now stand, are in advance of our own.

ITALY is also studying profoundly these issues, on which the minds of the Scientists of Christendom are deliberating.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF MENTAL DISEASES, as the basis of International Statistics of the Insane, upon as near as possible, a uniform system, has engaged the attention of thoughtful Scientists, Alienists and Publicists throughout the world. The older members of this body, and the readers of the MEDICO LEGAL JOURNAL are familiar with the progress of this endeavor, by an INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE named at a Conference held at ANTWERP, in the autumn of 1885, under the auspices of the BELGIAN SOCIETY OF MENTAL MEDICINE. You are familiar with the honorable and distinguished part taken in this work by many of the abler American Alienists.

The growth of the Literature of FORENSIC MEDICINE of NEUROLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, TOXICOLOGY, and STATE MEDICINE has been steadily increasing since 1872, when I first came to the chair of this body, and at no time more than in the past two or three years. New journals have sprung up into life in our own country, in Italy and elsewhere, and medical men, lawyers, jurists and judges, have been considering the issues forced upon the attention of the public, by the gravity

of the social and political questions brought to judicial and legislative notice.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

We should take measures towards :—

1. The reform of the Lunacy Statutes, as previously indicated by the Society, either through legislative inquiry and action, or by the abler and more intelligent work of a commission, favoring the latter.

2. The establishment of a State or National Chemist, with complete laboratory and equipments, supported and paid for by the State or National Government, with the best chemist in the country at its head, to be at the service of the Government or accused persons on all judicial proceedings or criminal trials.

3. The morgue of New York should be placed by law on a scientific and complete basis, after the manner of that of Paris. At its head should be placed a man of eminence and ability, who could have the confidence of the tribunals and the public, and who, like BROUARDEL in Paris, would not only answer at once, all questions arising in the courts in Toxicology or concerning deaths arising from other than natural causes; but who, surrounded by a corps of able assistants, would be enabled, while in the discharge of a great public duty, to render invaluable aids to science, and to the study of the numerous and intensely interesting questions arising in criminal cases, accidental deaths, suicides, &c., and aid the coroners in their valuable labors.

4. THE MEDICO LEGAL JOURNAL has been of great service to the body in bringing the questions here discussed before the scientists and students of every country on the globe.

It has thus enormously widened and broadened the field of the Society's usefulness, and lowered its horizon line, to a plane as broad and wide, as science can make her investigations practicable.

It is therefore the duty of the body, to sustain the Journal in its circulation, as well as in its finances. It would not require much time for each member to secure one, two or more subscribers, while this is small for each, in the aggregate, it would be a substantial service.

The contract between the Journal Association and the Society has been modified, so as to send the Journal free of charge, only to active, and not to honorary or corresponding members.

The total annual payments by the Society to the journal has been thus largely reduced. This throws a still greater burden on the journal, and entitles it to the support and help of every member of the Society, and not of a few individuals.

The larger the membership, the greater the assistance of the body in this work. Our active membership could easily be increased from 50 to 100 names in 1887, and I ask for this object the aid and co-operation of all the members, which if given with a will, and the situation brought to the notice of both professions, would make such a result practicable in the near future and before the summer vacation.

The Society has long since ceased to be local. It is semi-national in character. It is cosmopolitan actually, as well as in sentiment.

We have active members now in many of the American States, in the Canadas and in foreign countries.

Let us make an effort to have half a dozen at least in every State of the American Union on our active list, who would report to us cases arising in each State, and awaken interest, excite inquiry and discussion, and lend our unbiased and scientific aid to investigation and inquiry, wherever it was sought.

6. Courts, judges, district attorneys, and every officer concerned in the administration of justice, should know that they have the right to make inquiry of this body, and of its Permanent Commission, at any time, upon any question that may from time to time arise.

Counsel for defendants, scientific bodies, and members of either profession thus calling on our PERMANENT COMMISSION will receive like attention. As at present composed, it is a body entitled to the confidence of the Courts, and of the public.

7. The scientific examination of the various Psychological phenomena, which are now exciting inquiry and discussion throughout the scientific world, especially of Hypnotism, might well be made the duty of a carefully selected committee, who would formulate their labors during the year.

8. There is work for a properly organized committee on translations. Our exchanges now are rich with the learning of Russia, of all Scandinavia, of France, Ger-

man speaking countries, Spanish speaking nations, Italy, Portugal, modern Greece and Turkey.

I must call for volunteers upon this work.

The commendatory notices of credit for publication of papers read before this body from many sources, confirm me in the wisdom of previous recommendations, advising their publication.

If sixty subscribers can be found who will agree to receive series 4 and series 5 (if two more should be needed to complete the publication of all the valuable papers read before the body prior to the commencement of the journal), I should strongly recommend that the Committee on Publication be continued, and instructed to continue the publication limiting the liability of the Society to an expense not exceeding \$300 for 100 copies, half paper and half cloth, as in case of series 2 and 3 now completed.

The list of papers remaining unpublished comprises original papers, by

Dr. C. R. Agnew,  
 Dr. Geo. M. Beard,  
 Dr. Wooster Beach,  
 Clark Bell, Esq.,  
 Dr. A. N. Bell,  
 Ernest H. Crosby, Esq.,  
 D. C. Calvin, Esq.,  
 Geo. B. Corkhill, Esq.,  
 C. A. Doremus, M. D.,  
 Wm. G. Davies, Esq.,  
 Prof. R. Ogden Doremus,  
 Max F. Eller, Esq.,  
 Dr. T. C. Finnell,  
 Dr. Albert H. Gihon,  
 Dr. Wm. A. Hammond,

Dr. R. R. McIlvaine,  
 Dr. Moreau Morris,  
 Dr. J. J. O'Dea,  
 Dr. R. J. O'Sullivan,  
 Prof. W. J. Owen,  
 Dr. J. C. Peters,  
 G. W. Palmer, Esq.,  
 O. H. Palmer, Esq.,  
 Dr. R. L. Parsons,  
 Dr. Stephen Rogers,  
 Dr. Frank Ramsay,  
 H. S. Rokenbaugh, Esq.,  
 D. S. Riddle, Esq.,  
 Dr. Henry Raphael,  
 Dr. Ed. Sanders,

Dr. Graemme M. Hammond,	Jacob Shrady, Esq.,
Harry Hakes, Esq., M. D.,	Dr. W. G. Stephenson,
Prof. F. H. Hamilton,	William Shrady, Esq.,
A. G. Hull, Esq.,	Dr. E. C. Spitztka,
Dr. J. G. Johnson,	Dr. J. Clark Thomas,
Dr. A. O. Kellogg.	Dr. S. Waterman,
Ed. J. Loring, Esq.,	Dr. J. S. Wight,
Dr. S. N. Leo,	Dr. R. Witthaus,
Dr. Chas. A. Leale,	O. W. Wight, M. D.,
Dr. E. C. Mann,	Dr. Chas. S. Wood.
Dr. Edward Mead,	Geo. H. Yeaman, Esq.,
Dr. John T. Metcalf,	And others.
Appleton Morgan, Esq.,	

With some important Reports of Committees of the Society on various subjects.

These publications, if made complete, would contain original matter contributed at various times by these different gentlemen, and I shall send a statement of these considerations to the former subscribers, and the readers of the Medico-Legal Journal.

To publish all these in the style in which series 3 has been completed, would make the labors of this body quite complete, and form as a whole a most valuable contribution to forensic medicine, as well as aptly illustrate the usefulness of the Medico-Legal Society in relation thereto.

I have recently commenced such a subscription, which already contains subscribers to 42 volumes, and advise that we call upon former subscribers and all others to decide whether they wish to continue for the remaining series.

Let us address ourselves to the labors of the coming year with the energy their importance demands, and

make it worthy of the past fame and renown of the  
Medico Legal Society of New York.

